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# U.S. Sticking To Shah as Power Ebbs

New York Times News Service

With the position of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi apparently more tenuous than ever, the Carter administration appears committed to the view that the Iranian monarch should continue to play "an important role" in leading Iran to a new government of national reconciliation.

In Washington, a sense of crisis permeated conversations with U.S. officials, who were frustrated at the uncertainty of the future developments in the strategically important Persian Gulf area and in Iran itself. They acknowledged yesterday the upheavals have brought Iran's economy to its lowest point since the disorders intensified several months ago.

The view from Tehran today buttressed fears that the crisis appears to have reached an acute and decisive stage. Troops fired into the air and lobbed tear gas to break up anti-shah demonstrations on a main business street in downtown Tehran today, but the protesters regrouped and moved toward the university and the U.S. Embassy area. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

The state radio announced today that oil production has ceased and that the senate will hold a special session Saturday to "review the situation" in the country.

The new disorders followed a day of wild shooting and lawlessness in the capital and a strike that effectively shut down the oil industry.

TRUCKS AND CARS burned in Teheran streets, soldiers opened fire with automatic weapons on a funeral procession after an eyewitness said they shot their own colonel, and the city became a bellowing sound stage of sirens, gunfire and car horns.

Tear gas, smoke from pyres set aflame by anti-shah demonstrators, power cuts, stores shutting and merchants piling their stock on the back of trucks — Teheran almost visibly tottered and with it the Peacock Throne. All schools were closed and the state air, rail and bus services were not functioning.

Administration officials fear that if the shah were to abdicate, it would raise problems for the military in Iran, many of whose leaders have a personal loyalty to the shah. Without the shah, some officials said, a danger of civil war would exist.

It also would confirm the worst fears of some key officials who have worried about the strategic implications of a drastic political shift in Iran, which for years has been the West's chief security anchor in the Persian Gulf.

Faced with a rapidly approaching denouement, the United States set up a new high-level working group at the State Department, headed by David D. Newsom, its third-ranking official, to deal with the Iranian crisis. Newsom's group includes members from other agencies involved in Iran.

EARLIER IN THE month, George W. Ball, a former undersecretary of state, had headed a lower-level interagency committee that was drafting a long-range paper on the Persian Gulf. That report was completed and Ball has now left Washington.

Although the leader of Iran's main opposition movement, Karim Sanjabi of the National Front, has called for the shah to abdicate — he renewed the call yesterday — the administration remains committed to a more moderate solution, the creation of a new civilian government, to be followed by elections, and the establishment of a wider-based government.

This view was outlined by the State Department spokesman, Hodding Carter III.

He said that the exact form the new government should take was a matter for Iranians to decide for themselves. But he added:

"The United States position has basically been supportive of the shah's position of political liberalization. We continue to believe that he has an important role to play in moving through a transitional period to a more stable political system, one which, as we understand it, would be a government of national reconciliation."

SOME OFFICIALS have seen an increase in Soviet propaganda broadcasts to Iran as a sign of Soviet interest in helping to foment internal fragmentation in Iran.

Today, in its sharpest attack yet on American involvement in Iran, Moscow accused the United States of illegally interfering in Iran's political turbulence despite clear warnings from Moscow.

The official Communist Party daily Pravda, in a commentary by Pyotr Yevgeniev, said the United States had dispatched a special group of 60 State Department and CIA experts to Iran to seek a political solution protecting American

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